



# Gadcap gets fit to build on its nuclear history

Specialist cable manufacturer GadCap Technical Solutions is building on its long history of supplying the nuclear industry after being granted Fit For Nuclear.

Based in Washington, Tyne and Wear, GadCap began in the 1950s as part of BICC Cables, supplying a range of fire performance cables. Its experience with mineral insulated cables led to supplying thermocouples and fuelling ropes for the Magnox nuclear sites, and extended into gadolinium burnable poison (BP) cables to absorb excess neutrons for the AGR fleet from the early 1980s to today.

The company went through several changes over the years, culminating in a management buyout in 2019 led by operations director Michael Baker and technical director Paul Seccombe.

"When the seller, a large US multinational company, decided that its manufacturing operation for nuclear, power generation and aerospace was non-core for them, both myself and Paul felt we could continue with the strong business ties to which customers were accustomed," recalls Baker.


"We realised that although now becoming an SME, for the business to be successful the blue-chip clients we were

dealing with such as GE, Siemens, Westinghouse, Rolls-Royce and Pratt & Whitney would require the same commitment and business approach as they had previously known."

Now employing just 10 people, GadCap continued with activities such as lean enterprise, a process-driven strategy, and a strong environmental, health and safety culture. As the firm regained its financial footing after the buyout, the team started to look at new opportunities – and with the UK's AGR fleet now entering decommissioning, they knew they needed to explore new avenues to replace that revenue.

"With the longstanding history of supplying into the nuclear industry, it was felt the F4N programme could be the business improvement driver we needed to kick us on to the next level," Baker says. "F4N would offer us best practices, helping us develop and sustain operations, and ultimately aiding us to open into new territories and markets as per our strategic vision."





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Thanks to the firm's strong corporate mentality, background and understanding of nuclear business drivers, the journey to achieving F4N status took only nine months. "It was a matter of continuing with the strong programmes we already had in place, but then reintroducing the minor few that we had ceased running," notes Baker.

With support from Nuclear AMRC industrial advisor Nigel Goodrich, GadCap's development programme focused on areas such as training and employee communication.

"We felt we always had a good close working relationship with the employees, having daily contact with them through Gemba walks, regular team meetings and ad hoc conversations, but the recommendation to issue an employee engagement survey highlighted some areas that the workforce felt we could improve on," says technical director Paul Seccombe.

"The survey itself revealed that whilst people were mainly 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' in many aspects, we could improve on training opportunities and more enhanced employee well-being. We revisited the training and development programme and, with employee involvement, established a comprehensive programme looking at individuals' requirements on a three-year rolling basis."

Employees now have more responsibility and ownership of their areas, and are actively running their own kaizen workshops; performing all risk and COSHH assessments; and gaining formal qualifications in lean, health & safety, and supply chain management. The management also created an on-site gymnasium and games room to support staff wellbeing.

"We recognise the F4N status as being one that can help us continue with our company improvement programme, not only in being able to supply quality products and services, but

to meet with stringent controls combined with robust management systems and a strong safety culture," says Seccombe. "With the longevity we have in supplying the nuclear sector, we feel we are well placed to deliver on those requirements."

Nuclear typically accounts for around 35 per cent of GadCap's turnover, with other revenue coming from products including specialised sensors for the power generation and aerospace sectors.

"GadCap sees nuclear as a large part of its continuing operation, not only utilising the knowledge of product that we currently supply, but also in other applications using captive capacitance probes and the supporting capabilities we have such as laser welding and CNC machining," Seccombe notes.

"We believe we can be a key reliable supplier for the increasing demands in existing and future fuel generation the sector requires."

[gadcap.co.uk](http://gadcap.co.uk)  
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